



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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**Statement by Secretary Bruce Babbitt
on the Impact of NAFTA on
Border Wildlife and Habitat**

There is significant misinformation on NAFTA's potential impact on wildlife and habitat conservation.

We clearly recognize that the greater trade associated with NAFTA could have impacts on wildlife and habitat. But the fact is, NAFTA can help strengthen our protection efforts, rather than hamper them. With NAFTA or without, there will be economic development of some kind in Mexico; signing a binding agreement with the Mexican government can give us leverage in addressing these issues.

Because we recognize that border habitat is critical, we have, along with other federal agencies, prepared to request sufficient funds in the coming year's budget to address the issues of concern to our wildlife managers. That same recognition is why the agreement acknowledges the primacy of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the most effective international mechanism for protecting biodiversity. It is also why the supplemental agreement requires a commitment "to better conserve, protect, and enhance the environment including, wild flora and fauna."

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